

# PAYCHECK TO PAYCHECK



## Colorado Report - May 2019

The annual **Paycheck to Paycheck** report from the National Housing Conference (NHC) examines workers' ability to afford housing in metro areas across the United States. NHC partnered with Housing Colorado to focus on the unique housing affordability challenges in Colorado. This report compares median housing costs and median income data in six metro areas -- Denver, Boulder, Greeley, Fort Collins, Pueblo and Colorado Springs -- for five key community occupations: childcare worker, firefighter dental assistant, plumber and bank teller.

### Rent or Buy? Both are tough for essential workers.

Not one of six metro areas has rental housing affordable to all five occupations. A two-bedroom rental unit in Pueblo is affordable to three of the five occupations. Boulder is affordable to only plumbers. Plumbers can afford a two-bedroom rental home in all six metro areas while childcare workers and bank tellers are unable to afford two-bedroom rental homes in any of the areas.

Rents in Boulder and Denver are about 25 percent higher than the national average of \$1,149 for a two-bedroom unit and Colorado Springs is just 1 percent higher than the national average. Rents in Fort Collins, Greeley and Pueblo are below the national average.

Can the people who are working to make our communities safe, vital, and healthy afford to live in Colorado? Many of our essential workers don't earn enough to pay market rental rates, let alone own a home.

#### Essential Workers

**Y** Yes **N** No



Childcare Worker



Firefighter



Dental Assistant



Plumber



Bank Teller

	Rent	Childcare Worker	Firefighter	Dental Assistant	Plumber	Bank Teller
<b>Boulder</b>	Rent	N	N	N	Y	N
	Own	N	N	N	N	N
<b>CO Springs</b>	Rent	N	Y	N	Y	N
	Own	N	N	N	N	N
<b>Denver</b>	Rent	N	Y	N	Y	N
	Own	N	N	N	N	N
<b>Fort Collins</b>	Rent	N	Y	N	Y	N
	Own	N	N	N	N	N
<b>Greeley</b>	Rent	N	Y	N	Y	N
	Own	N	N	N	N	N
<b>Pueblo</b>	Rent	N	Y	Y	Y	N
	Own	N	Y	N	Y	N

Source: National Housing Conference, Paycheck to Paycheck, 2018



**Housing affordability** is a crisis in many Colorado communities. The cost of housing in has become unaffordable for essential service workers.

## Colorado is amazing. But so are the home prices.

Homeownership is a significant wealth building opportunity. In Pueblo, home ownership is out of reach for all but plumbers and firefighters. None of the other occupations studied can afford to purchase a home in any of the metro areas. Homeownership is even further out of reach for renters who pay more than 30 percent of their income towards housing costs. A bank teller in Boulder and Denver must spend almost 60 percent of their income on rent, leaving little left over in savings for a down payment for a mortgage with the bank in which they work.

Home prices in Boulder are more than double the national median home price of \$252,000. Homes in Denver are 59 percent more than the national median home price and Fort Collins trails closely behind at 47 percent more than the national median home price. Greeley and Colorado Springs are also above the national median home price (at 29 percent more and 12 percent more, respectively), while Pueblo falls below at 37 percent.

### Boulder

+116%

### Denver

+59%

### Fort Collins

+47%

### Greeley

+29%

### Colorado Springs

+12%

### Pueblo

-37%

The median sales prices of homes in five out of six Colorado metro areas range from 12% to 116% higher than the national median sales price of \$252,000. The only outlier to this trend is Pueblo, which is 37% below the national average.

Source: National Housing Conference Pauecheck to Pauecheck 2018

Lack of affordable housing reverberates throughout communities. Workers relocate to more affordable areas, spend more time on longer commutes, and spend less on essential household costs like healthcare and food. Businesses find it difficult to attract qualified workers, affecting their ability to survive, resulting in long term economic development consequences.



Housing Colorado

*Housing Colorado is a non-partisan, membership-based organization serving as the voice and action for affordable housing in Colorado.*  
[www.housingcolorado.org](http://www.housingcolorado.org)